



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 25-Sep-2023 | Report No: PIDA36676



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Mauritania	Project ID P181311	Project Name Decentralization and Productive Intermediate Cities Support Project AF	Parent Project ID (if any) P169332
Parent Project Name Decentralization and Productive Intermediate Cities Support Project	Region WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 17-Oct-2023	Estimated Board Date 30-Nov-2023
Practice Area (Lead) Urban, Resilience and Land	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Implementing Agency Ministry of Economy and Industry

Proposed Development Objective(s) Parent

The development objectives of this operation are to (i) improve access to local services in selected localities; and (ii) strengthen the capacities of Local Governments to plan and manage local public services.

Components

- Improving Access to Infrastructure and Services for Economic Development
- Strengthening Decentralization and Local Government Capacity
- Project Management
- Contingency Emergency Response Component

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	25.00
Total Financing	25.00
of which IBRD/IDA	25.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	25.00
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IDA Credit	25.00
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Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Substantial

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Mauritania is facing higher frequency and severity of climate-related natural disasters, which affect economic stability and growth. The country is exposed to various types of hazards, including river, coastal and urban floods, water scarcity wildfires and extreme heat.¹ The 2022 World Disaster Risk Index established by the United Nations System ranks Mauritania 61st (out of 192) among the world’s highest risk countries, with a lack of adaptive capacities rated as is high. Climate change is expected to increase risks and severity of natural disasters in Mauritania, through more intense temperatures, prolonged heat waves and heightened rainfall variability. Mauritania is also projected to face the highest relative sea level rise in West Africa over the course of this century.² The frequency of disaster is taking a toll on the economic performance, particularly in agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. From 2000-2020, on average, almost 10 percent of the population has been impacted by climate hazards.³ Over the last decade, deadly floods have been reported once every two years on average. Annual average losses associated with floods are estimated at US\$17.39 million (0.25 percent of Gross Domestic Product).⁴

With 56 percent of its population living in urban areas in 2021,⁵ Mauritania stands as one of the most urbanized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. More than 60 percent of the urban population lives in the capital Nouakchott⁶ while the remainder is mostly settled within the Senegal River Valley, bordering Senegal and Mali to the South and East. A third area of settlement is related to iron mining at Zoueirat and its export through the port of Nouadhibou. It is estimated that almost 80 percent of the urban population resides in slums, highlighting the high levels of vulnerability of urban dwellers.⁷ Likewise, the fast-paced urbanization of Mauritania has not been informed by climate and disaster risk planning or analysis, and cities have been steadily expanding in risk prone areas.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

Most urban areas in Mauritania are currently exposed to high flood risk. A large share of the urban population lives in flood prone areas and flooding is a recurring issue. The floods following the 2022 rainy

¹ ThinkHazard!

² Ibid.

³ International Monetary Fund Country Report No. 23/74.

⁴ Mauritania First Fiscal Management and Resilience DPO (P179263) Program Document: The World Bank.

⁵ World Bank Data: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=MR>

⁶ Africapolis: Mauritania Country Report.

⁷ Mauritania First Fiscal Management and Resilience DPO (P179263) Program Document: The World Bank.

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season caused 19 casualties (mostly children), affected 38,000 people, and destroyed 4,000 housing units.⁸ In previous years, four people have reportedly died in Assaba region on 13 September 2020, and 5 people have reportedly died following the flooding that affected southern parts of the country in August in 2019.⁹ The regions of Brakna and Assaba were affected by floods in 2017, leaving at least 18 people dead.¹⁰ Flooding also affects the economic activities in the cities, either by the destruction or damage to infrastructure as well as by limiting urban mobility of people and goods. Lastly, stagnant water in urban areas contaminated by solid and liquid waste results in an unsanitary environment for the local population, putting them at risk of epidemics.

Lack of investment in flood management infrastructure and insufficient urban planning are the main drivers of urban flooding, in addition to changing rainfall patterns. Financing for flood management has been quite limited in the recent past despite quick urban growth. No recurring budget for maintenance is allocated to the National Office for Sanitation (*Office National d'Assainissement*, ONAS). Despite urban planning instruments, certain cities (in particular, Nouakchott, Kaédi, and Rosso) have expanded without due consideration of climate risks, and without adequate investment in drainage systems. This is particularly complex in the project intervention area in the Senegal River Valley, where the main cities are all located in depression areas compared to the sea level or river level and with high water table levels. In Kaédi, for instance, settlements are built in areas at risk of flooding, within the city as well as on the riverbank. In addition, flood management systems are weak, their absorption capacity is insufficient, and they are not well maintained. Lack of solid waste management (SWM) in Kaédi also affects the drainage system. Rosso is characterized by a flat terrain and clay soil— with flash flooding considered highly likely. High risk for river flooding is also high due to heavy rainfall interspersed with increased aridity. In Rosso, at the time of the 2022 flooding, four out of four water pumps were not operational, and drains were completely saturated with sediments and debris. A sanitary landfill financed by the parent project is underway in Rosso (to be delivered by 2024).

While some steps have been taken by the GoM in building overall disaster risk management policy and frameworks, significant gaps persist at both the institutional and operational levels. A national disaster risk reduction strategy and plan were developed in 2007 and validated in 2009. Mauritania has a National Relief Organizational Plan (*Plan d'organisation de secours d'urgence*, ORSEC) to manage emergency relief through an inter-ministerial committee under the authority of the Prime Minister. The ORSEC plan covers procedures for sending and receiving countermeasures and deploying personnel during disasters. National early warning system and response mechanism to crises and natural disasters have been established, following the COVID-19 pandemic, with regional authorities of early warning and crisis management set up in the country's 15 provinces (*wilayas*). However, the current framework is outdated and remains inadequate to fully operationalize comprehensive management of disasters as well as to implement the disaster reduction policy and strategy. Cross-sectoral coordination remains weak, which resulted in fragmented implementation and limited effectiveness of integrated risk reduction policies.

⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/mauritania/mauritania-floods-update-noaa-cpc-un-ocha-echo-daily-flash-14-september-2022#:~:text=Since%20late%20July%2C%20heavy%20rainfall,and%20almost%204%2C000%20houses%20destroyed.>

⁹ <https://floodlist.com/africa/mauritania-floods-september-2020>

¹⁰ <https://floodlist.com/africa/mauritania-floods-brakna-assaba-september-2017>



C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Original PDO

The development objectives of this operation are to (i) improve access to local services in selected localities; and (ii) strengthen the capacities of Local Governments to plan and manage local public services.

Current PDO

The PDO will remain the same.

Key Results

Urban area in Kaédi and Rosso protected against recurrent flooding through drainage works (Hectare(Ha)).

D. Project Description

A new Subcomponent 1.3 (US\$25.0 million): Urban Flood Risk Reduction and Resilient Recovery will be added under Component 1: Improving Access to Infrastructure and Services for Economic Development.

The investment activities of Subcomponent 1.3 will be primarily focused on the intermediate cities that were mostly affected by the 2022 floods— Kaédi and Rosso. Studies and TA will be carried out in other cities that show great vulnerability as well. More specifically, Subcomponent 1.3 includes three main types of activities:

- I. Urban planning and flood management studies and tools (US\$5.0 million). A series of urban planning instruments and technical studies for long-term interventions in the sector focused on strengthening the coping abilities of cities to existing urban challenges and future ones that will arise with new urban extensions. Urban planning tools will be simplified and will consider climate change, following the principles enshrined under the new urban Code that was adopted by the Councils of Ministers on October 12, 2023— as supported by an upcoming budget support operation. They include *inter alia*: (i) urban masterplans (*schéma directeur d'aménagement urbain*, SDAU) to operationalize the new urban Code; (ii) flood-related data collection for urban agglomeration – for example Digital Terrain Models using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) – to support national observation and climate change projection efforts looking at the next 50 years; and (iii) Flood Prevention and Urban Resilience Plans looking at least at the next 50 years.¹¹
- II. Priority investments for sustainable flood risk reduction (US\$18.0 million). Deriving from the abovementioned studies and tools and considering climate change projections for Mauritania, priority investments are a combination of grey, blue, and green infrastructure for building back better, including technical studies, primarily in the two cities of Kaédi and Rosso. In Kaédi, activities could include: (i) cleaning/dredging of the existing drainage system and city cleaning in general (including retention ponds); (ii) construction of a flood-proof landfill and support to a functioning SWM system; (iii) feasibility studies/works for the reinforcement of dykes; (iv) rehabilitation of the existing stormwater facilities and drainage system; and (v) nature-based solutions (NBS), including rehabilitation or creation of infiltration ponds, green and blue corridors, rehabilitation of wetlands. In Rosso, activities could include: (i) rehabilitation of pumping stations; (ii) cleaning/dredging of the

¹¹ Several data center initiatives on climate and urban are being initiated and the project would assess and support a consolidated approach for greater financial sustainability.



existing stormwater facilities and drainage system; (iii) rehabilitation of the existing drainage system to increase the capacity of the network and reduce the entry of waste and sand; and (iv) NBS, including the creation of infiltration ponds, green and blue corridors, rehabilitation of wetlands. Depending on preliminary technical studies findings and resulting final estimate, rapid civil works to strengthen the urban resilience in other cities could also be financed based on needs.¹² Investments will be prioritized based on efficiency and efficacy criteria as well as E&S requirements including citizen engagement and will be further detailed in the Project Operations Manual.

- III. Technical assistance activities to strengthen the institutional capacity to manage the sector and to prepare for and respond to disasters (US\$2.0 million). These include: (i) institutional capacity support, including capacity building and TA, as well as acquisition of some critical material, to ensure efficient SWM by municipalities (e.g., anti-littering campaign/community health and safety), operations and maintenance (O&M) of the drainage systems by the ONAS and municipalities and risk-sensitive/climate resilience urban development to prevent the further encroachment of settlements in hazard areas and/or to facilitate adaptive measures to mitigate future flood damages; and (ii) support for basic emergency management equipment (e.g., Search and Rescue) based on the identified needs and gaps.

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Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The E&S risk management instruments such as the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF), and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) which were prepared for the parent project were updated to cover the Additional Financing (AF). The last environmental and social performance rating (ISR April 2023) of the parent project was Moderately Satisfactory due to delays in preparing E&S instruments and due to gaps noted in the implementation of occupational health and safety (OHS) by the contractors responsible for the civil works. The gaps are being addressed through an action plan that is being closely monitored by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU).

Like the parent project, construction and rehabilitation activities under the AF may generate some E&S risks and impacts. During the construction phase, potential E&S risks and impacts are mainly related to (i) resource efficiency (water, energy and raw material use); (ii) alteration of air quality by dust rising during construction/rehabilitation of urban roads, and rehabilitation of stormwater drainage networks; (iii) sound pollution due to noise and vibration from moving of construction vehicles and machinery; (iv) soil and water resources contamination due to poor management of hazardous and non-hazardous wastes; (v) occupational and community health and safety due to the civil works in urban

¹² These are investments that will likely not require environmental and social impact assessments and that can be prepared and implemented in a short period of time.



areas, including influx of some workers, which can lead to adverse social impacts (gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, communicable diseases) on local communities. In the operational phase (i) leachate and runoff from waste management facilities that can contaminate soil and water resources; (ii) drainage wastewater during the dry season that could affect the water quality of the Senegal River. Both could lead to community health and safety issues. Traffic and road safety are other community health and safety issues to be addressed during operation.

E&S clauses are imbedded in bidding documents for civil works to ensure contractors follow up on environmental and social due diligence and to mitigate the anticipated negative risks and impacts. Day-to-day supervision of the implementation of E&S measures will be carried out by the supervising engineer (*Bureau de contrôle*) that is already in place under the parent project, staffed with E&S specialists. The Moudoun PCU, as well as the SOMELEC PCU, each include one environment specialist and one social specialist (focused on gender). This capacity will need to be reinforced with an additional social specialist and targeted capacity building over the next 12 months.

The Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM) established under the parent project will receive and manage complaints related to the activities financed by the AF. It will be extended to the Communes covered by the AF. An SEA/HS action plan was developed and validated by the World Bank. It will be extended also to the AF activities.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

The institutional arrangements remain the same. The Moudoun PCU will carry out the Subcomponent 1.3 activities. Given that the flood management competence falls under ONAS, a contract management agreement (*Convention de Maitrise d’Ouvrage Délégue*) between the PCU and ONAS will be signed to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities with regards to the civil works that will be undertaken in Kaédi and Rosso. Operations and maintenance systems will be carried by the competent authorities. Given limited local capabilities in the area of flood risk management, the PCU will be supported by a technical advisor (multi-skilled firm) who was recruited to help conduct the newly added activities and ensure quality control.

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APPROVAL

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